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Effective Staffing Turnaround Principle #5

The focus of this article for this month is [Turnaround Principle 5 –Effective Staffing Practices](#). Turnaround Principles are not only used as a strategic system to support schools that may be struggling, but also as indicators for high performing schools. When discussing [Turnaround Principle 5](#)- effective staffing practices it is important for schools to develop and have systems in place for the following: Teacher recruitment of quality candidates, Evaluation practices that improve student learning, A professional development structure that supports continual improvement and professional growth and, Effective staff assignments to maximize student learning opportunities by accessing the staff's instructional strengths. All of the components cannot be viewed in isolation from one another but integrated, dependent practices that require the careful attention and planning for school leaders.

Teacher Recruitment

It is important that schools consider strong candidates for vacancies they have and determine how they will find and recruit those candidates. Teachers for these positions must be selected through a rigorous and thorough screening process to ensure that they have the skills and characteristics of highly effective teachers. Schools or districts need to have a process to cast a wide net for recruitment efforts and not just traditional venues. The selection of staff should be a team effort that includes the administrative and leadership teams. This team collaborates in the selection process and is present at formal interviews and demonstration lessons. It is highly encouraged for schools to utilize demonstration lessons as a strategy to determine a candidate's instructional capacity in practice. This process may look very differently based on individual schools' needs, but schools that have implemented demo lessons have found great success in selecting quality candidates. During the selection process it is important to match prospective teachers to the position expectations and needs. If the candidate has teaching experience it would be sound practice to look at prior student learning outcomes, if possible, to determine a positive match.

Teacher /Educator Evaluation

Systematic and frequent school-wide observations that include consistent staff feedback on agreed upon expectations and instructional practices are essential to maintaining a high quality staff. These are a way to support teachers and inform professional development efforts. Regular feedback to teachers from observations should focus on the instructional development of teachers, implementation of strategies, and alignment to school improvement goals. The goal of evaluation is not only accountability for student learning but also the basis for improving classroom practices, informing professional development, and increasing learning outcomes.

Professional Development

Professional development planning must be intentional and not a random disconnected event. Effective professional development should be linked to teacher needs as evidenced by observations and walkthroughs as well as be connected to student learning data and school-wide goals. Walkthroughs as well as classroom observations and monitoring are conducted so that the instructional leader can ensure the practices are implemented and effective. Connecting PD to what teachers need, student learning data and outcomes, along with collaboration among teachers can transform into a professional learning community where everyone is learning together, sharing practices, and supporting one another.

Staff Assignments

It is critical when assigning teachers that they have the right skills, competencies, and content knowledge to achieve student learning outcomes. Those teachers that provide interventions should have the necessary knowledge to effectively deliver and implement the interventions. Schools should have a plan and policy in place for staff that are considered not aligned to their position or unskilled and be placed on an improvement or support plan. Appropriate supports should be provided to the teacher based on needs and documentation of consistently underperforming staff should be kept to show progress made on improvements. There should also be a plan in place as well as a sense of urgency to dismiss those not making the necessary improvements.

The Outreach Division of School Improvement website has resources available to schools and districts in the area of effective staffing. These resources can be found [here](#).